

**THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND NEW MEDIA ON A DEVELOPING
NATION'S EDUCATION SYSTEM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HAITI**

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Dedication

Above all I give this thesis to Christ who strengthens me.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving and understanding wife, who has supported me completely throughout this processes. Without her love and support this thesis would have never happened.

Finally, this is dedicated to the Haitian people.

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Abstract

Haiti is a unique environment, not just as a third world nation but also in culture and heritage. Economic and political instability has left this country without some of the basic needs and opportunities that we in the western world take for granted. Solutions to Haiti's problems will only be realized through the understanding of Haiti's problems. My research's first goal was to understand the problem of education in Haiti, and then attempt to understand how media and technology can play a role in reform.

This study uses qualitative methods to examine a two fold thesis; 1. The cultural differences of Haiti is a context that needs understanding, and 2. How can media and technology benefit the education and cultural society of Haiti? Through my research I seek to demonstrate alternate methods of education through media technologies.

Education is an answer to the Haitian people's problem, it is not, however, a solution for the country's problems. These two contrasting theories are what I will examine and explore. This study will examine the impact of media on the society and culture of Haiti. Through qualitative research methods used while conducting field research in Haiti, I will address a series of research questions pertaining to the potential effectiveness of media technology education techniques. Using qualitative methods, open-ended questions and participant observation I was able to gather important insights and data on these topics in Haiti with Haitians. While there are many proposed solutions to Haiti's problems I would rather present an option to better the situation for a small population of Haitian youth. Give a child food and water for life and they will eventually die. Give a child education and that child has the potential to better their economical situation and rise out of poverty.

Chapter I: The Problem

The history of Haiti is a road marked with tragedy, sadness and hopelessness. From the time Christopher Columbus landed on the northern shores of the island Hispaniola, the nation of what we now know as Haiti. It has been in a state of constant turmoil (Dash, 2001, p.3). What once was the lavish gem of the Caribbean under French rule became a wayward land of oppression and despair. Arthur and Dash put this early colonial time into perspective in their book *A Haiti Anthology: libete*,

The struggle for *libete*, the Creolisation of the French, *liberte*, (freedom in English) is, in many respects, the story of Haiti. Under Spanish and then French colonial rule, the African slaves brought to Hispaniola to replace the exterminated Tainos, struggled to gain their freedom from enslavement on the plantations. The independent nation of Haiti was born of twelve years of revolutionary warfare waged in pursuit of freedom from slavery and from colonial subjugation. After independence, the liberated slaves' yearning to escape the constraints of laboring for others impelled them to take control of their own plots, so transforming the pattern of landholding in a way almost unique to the continent. (p. 11)

The French needed slaves to sustain their rich economy on the Haitian plantations. They were also responsible for killing the entire race of indigenous Tainos through disease and murder (Farmer, 1994, pp. 60-61).

In 1804 Haiti became the world's first independent black nation and the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere, the United States being the first (Dash, 2001, p. 7). It was more than a half a century before the United States and most larger

trade nations recognized Haiti's independence (Dash, 2001, p. 8). Dash (2001) sums up the post independence collapse of Haitian plantations compared to the post independence environment of other Latin American nations:

...Haiti in the nineteenth century was profoundly different from the rest of Latin America, whose post-independence experience was characterized by a land-owning aristocracy and peons who worked their large estates. Haiti's aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons because they owned or squatted on their own small farms. (p. 9)

This led to a caste system in Haiti that would shape much of the history and politics to follow. The caste system was marked by contradictions of this unique social system of an illiterate and distrustful peasant majority, and a small rivaling elite. In turn Haiti was left with no middle class to moderate or stabilize the political and cultural situations (Dash, 2001, p. 10). Patrick Lemonie observed how this social instablization led to the tragic decay of the culture and political structure in his book, *Fort-Dimanche: Dungeon of death*:

Isolated by the world powers of the time, which viewed the formation of this new nation as a threatening example to their colonies, Haiti could not capitalize on the gain of the revolution. This young nation witnessed a succession of autocratic governments which ended with the American Occupation of 1915-1934. The post-American years brought about seeming stability that lasted through the 1950's, until Francois Duvalier, better known as Papa Doc Duvalier, took the oath of office in 1957 as president of Haiti, presumably for six years. This event,

benign in appearance, was about to change the destiny of this entire nation. So began Haiti's longest nightmare! (pp. 5-6)

Duvalier's regime lasted into the 1990's with his son Baby Doc, which further deteriorated the institutions of the society through torture and intimidation. Duvalier consolidated power by taking control of the influential institutions of the society that posed a threat to him; churches, schools, trade unions, and the media (Dash, 2001, p. 16). This environment of oppression and control gave the people of Haiti no voice and little power over their own situations. The policies of Papa Doc and Baby Doc led to the eventual overthrow of the government in 1986 through the pressures brought on by the Haitian people (Dash, 2001, pp. 21-23). The UN supervised the first democratic elections in Haiti in over five decades in 1990, which resulted in the election of the charismatic priest Jean Bertrand Aristide (Dash, 2001, p. 24). This fiery administration managed to anger the elite, military and conservative political majority in Washington (Dash, 2001, p. 24). After only seven months Aristide was forced out of office into exile through a military coup, thus furthering the unstable political environment in Haiti (Dash, 2001, pp. 24-25). In 1994 the Clinton administration was integral in installing Aristide back to power using American troops. His administration was marked by a continued degradation of the Haitian economy and political corruption, until his eventual overthrow in 2004 (Haiti, 2009). The current climate in Haiti is one of moderate stability, but with little improvement. The economic and political conditions are not improving due to, "An old political culture based on divisiveness, an inability to compromise, and a lack of genuine concern for the mass of the Haitian people..." (Dash, 2001, p. 26). Today Haiti is considered the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere with over eighty percent of its

population in poverty and fifty four percent of them in abject poverty (The World Factbook, 2009).

Their economy stabilized after the conflicts of 2004 and has shown positive growth since 2005 (The World Factbook, 2009). Two thirds of Haitians depend on small subsistence agriculture as their source of income. Along with that over sixty percent of Haitians live in rural areas (The World Factbook, 2009). Haiti was once ninety percent forested and now only two percent remain forested (Dash, 2001, p.2). Its terrain is in stark contrast to that of the Dominican Republic which resembles what Haiti used to look like at one time. The island of Hispaniola, which Haiti and the Dominican Republic share, is truly a story of two halves.

Education

Illiteracy has been a problem in Haiti since its independence in 1804. Additionally, the lack of structure and organization of a national education system has lead to a cycle of ignorance in Haiti for over two hundred years (Salmi, 1998, pp. 135-136). Education for children between the ages of six and twelve is legally mandatory, but a small proportion of Haitian children attend school (Haiti, 2009). Laws regarding education are rarely enforced due to a lack of importance placed on the education of the society (Salmi, 1998, p. 136). Over half of Haitian adults are illiterate, a direct result of the education system within the country (Haiti, 2009). Only ten percent of Haitian schools are public with the remaining ones being private (Salmi, 1998, p. 136). With over ninety percent of Haitian schools being private, there lacks a level of oversight and quality consistency (Salmi, 1998, p. 136). Many of these private schools are run by religious organizations that sometimes are under funded to perform the job of educating a

community of students (Salmi, 1998, p. 136). A lack of updated facilities, coordinated curriculum, new textbooks, and unqualified instructors plague the struggling education system of Haiti (Salmi, 1998, p. 136). In most countries the private school system is superior in quality to the public. However, in Haiti it is the exact opposite. The small amount of public schools in Haiti caters to the elite and foreign diplomats (Salmi, 1998, pp. 135-136). Education has been described by many to be the essential backbone to a society's culture. In Haiti it has become a curse in a cycle of hopelessness.

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Give a child food and water for life and they will eventually die. Give a child education and that child has the potential to better their economical situation and rise out of poverty.

Significance of Study in the Communication Field

The uses of media in education go back to the film projector. Now we have fully dedicated digital classrooms to facilitate education in virtual worlds. These advancements in media technology have not always been quickly embraced by the western educational systems. Some items, like the computer, were quickly introduced and then not utilized effectively. Factors like budgets and qualified instructors have also plagued the inclusion of media technology in the classroom. However, this is the modern classroom in developed nations. The conditions of classrooms in undeveloped nations look much different in terms of media adoption. In Haiti the majority of the classrooms I visited were very basic rooms at best. Most did not have electricity in the classrooms, let alone a computer or digital device. Still there is a large contingency of organizations that see the importance of media technology in the classroom and therefore are working to see that children in developing nations have the same opportunities as their developed nation counterparts. Many reasons have been given to both support and refute putting technology in these classrooms. Some of the popular reasons for the technology are economic based: improving students' technology skills, creating a better-educated work force, and attracting new jobs (Zucker & Light, 2009). Also, there are the equity concerns that poor students would have the same access as do the elite of the society (Zucker & Light, 2009). Many education professionals also think it is important to change the way teachers educate as we move into the twenty first century (Zucker & Light, 2009). Closely tied to the issue of using media in education are the various laptop humanitarian projects. The better known, One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project, as a present example of digital technology impacting education in developing nations. OLPC is one of the more popular laptop humanitarian initiatives (Markoff, 2006). This project's goal, along

with others similar initiatives, is to put laptops in the hands of developing nation's children (Talbot, 2008). Seymour Papert, a computer scientist, was quoted in The New York Times in favor of the project saying, "...that if young people are given computers and allowed to explore, they will learn how to learn. It is a more valuable skill than traditional teaching strategies that focus on memorization and testing." (Markoff, 2006).

Computers, the internet and globalization have changed the skill requirements for graduates entering the open market (Zucker & Light, 2009). Zucker and Light (2009) address this need for computers and technology in education in developing nations: "At the same time, in many developing countries there is a demand for deep reforms in education to help create a more democratic, participatory, and responsible society, which calls for substantial changes in the schools." Using participant observation in Haiti allowed me to see the impact media could have on their education system. This on the ground observation in the schools in various locations of Haiti, produced data that supported the influence media technology has and could have on other schools. I examined two traditional typical private schools as well as two non-traditional media schools. I also had the opportunity to do in depth interviews using open-ended question techniques to achieve a higher quality data set.

A key element to the success of implementing digital media in a developing country's classroom is the idea of universalism (Shneiderman, 2003, p. 37). Universalism refers to the universal usability of a technology to a given society. It also applies to the universality of common symbols and icons used for communication and interpretation (Shneiderman, 2003, p. 37). Communicating across language and cultural barriers has long been a significant topic in the field of communication.

The OLPC project has attempted universal usability with the XO (Markoff, 2006). OLPC's XO laptop is an example of these principles in action and is their attempt at universal usability. Children in Peru were some of the first to use the XO Laptop. Immediately they were figuring out how to open the computer, turn it on, and start using software tools (Talbot, 2008). The same thing is happening all over the world in different countries in different languages. The reason behind this is in the communication design of the XO's operating system (Progue, 2007). The operating system was custom built to have no language. It contains only icons and universal symbols. Using these icons allows the laptop to cross language barriers all over the world (Progue, 2007). By making the XO an affordable and rugged laptop, OLPC has accomplished the first goal of universality. However, true universal usability can only be achieved through an interface and information design that is self explanatory (Shneiderman, 2003, p. 37).

By applying these same principals to digital media, the computer becomes the communication tool and translator; bridging the gap between cultures and languages. The visual medium of mass media can also be a universal tool of communication. By teaching children how to communicate through images and video, the language barriers are again overcome (Greenfield, 2009). Images and video are universal and can communicate powerful messages without the need of interpretation. My goal was to see if teaching Haitian students digital media technology could improve the quality of life for the child as well as provide hope that they may make a life for themselves outside of their poverty (Talbot, 2008).

In most developing nations illiteracy is a large problem, thus making any form of print media ineffective. This is no truer then in Haiti. With illiteracy rates reported as

high as eighty percent the main form of information for most Haitians is the radio (Dash, 2001, p.86). Almost everyone in Haiti has a radio or access to one (Triest, 1993, p. 153). Walking around in the different communities of Haiti I quickly recognized that television was also an important part of their culture. Most people had access to a TV. These were usually community televisions where people from the neighborhood would come to watch.

Mass media can have a profound effect on the rich and poor of the country. This impact and influence has cost some their lives and some their jobs. Mass media has also been used by the people of Haiti to educate their citizens on the atrocities of their government and to motivate their people to protest for change (Dash, 2001, p. 87). In most developing nations electronic media remains the best way to connect to the vast majority of the country's population. This is both a literacy reason as much as it is a geographical reason. The mountainous terrain in Haiti restricts communication connections through roads and traditional means. Therefore a network of radio and television towers are the only efficient ways of connecting to the remote parts of the country (Dash, 2001, pp. 87-88).

The use of unconventional media education in Haiti is also significant to this study, referring specifically to the instruction of digital media techniques, skills, and philosophies in current schools or in specialized media schools. This idea is a radical departure from the traditional education structure of developing nations, specifically Haiti (Salmi, 1998, p. 135). All over the world education reforms are either being considered or implemented. With limited resources available inside developing nations radical approaches are going through trials (Talbot, 2008). Some departures from traditional

education are happening most in areas that lack basic infrastructure elements like electricity, water, and books in the schools (Talbot, 2008). Only thirty percent of Haitians have electricity while their neighbor the Dominican Republic boasts a seventy percent usage rate (Global Link, 2001). These facts alone prove that teaching Haitians media technology is very unconventional. However, it is these unconventional techniques that are producing results in school aged children world wide (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84).

A review of 30 studies...found few with rigorous designs, but the studies measuring learning outcomes showed consistent, positive effects on students' writing skills.

(Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84).

While in Haiti I was able to perform participant observation in a traditional school as well as a media school. Both of these schools were in the greater Port Au Prince area.

Observations of conventional versus unconventional educational structures provided the contrasting comparison to organize the data into criteria for analysis. This analysis along with the relevant literature and in depth interviews gave me the data necessary to address the research questions. Without such hands-on interaction to both methods of education in Haiti I would have not been able to research this topic. Information about such topics is difficult at best to obtain on Haiti.

Statement of Research Questions

Haiti is afflicted with the most abject poverty in the Western Hemisphere (The World Factbook, 2009). Due to this fact many have proposed what the problem is with Haiti. This exercise is futile because the problems in Haiti are too complex and too many to understand or comprehend. What is clear is Haiti does need help from the world. There

is no one solution or magic key that will cure the literal and figurative diseases of a nation in turmoil.

Education is only one solution to a subset of problems in Haiti. What is unique about education is how it can impact a child for life. Donating money to feed a child for a month will change that child for one month. Educate a child for a month and that knowledge is theirs forever. Thomas Jefferson once said, “I feel ... an ardent desire to see knowledge so disseminated through the mass of mankind that it may ... reach even the extremes of society: beggars and kings.” (Shneiderman, 2003, p. 36). Jefferson had a point. Information belongs to no one person but rather the world at large. Knowledge is universal and is the right of every human to obtain. Through knowledge we form social contexts, shape our worldview, and give life to our ideas.

Many have criticized unconventional technology based education reforms in developing nations for ignoring what they feel is more important issues: clean water, malaria protection, and food. Nicholas Negroponte, creator of the OLPC project, response to that is, “Nobody I know would say, ‘By the way, let’s hold off on education.’ Education happens to be a solution to all of those same problems.” (Progue, 2007). Negroponte does not see it as a laptop that he is giving to children; he sees it as education (Talbot, 2008). He may be on to something. What children need in these remote areas of the world is something that can bring knowledge from the outside, and it’s not likely to be a large library of books (Talbot, 2008).

What is evident is the enormity of the Haiti problem. What is not apparent is the obvious solution. In choosing Haiti as a research area it was my intention to find one possible solution to focus on. The most obvious way to incorporate my academic focus to

Haiti was in digital media education. It is through media education where my first and primary question originates: Can unconventional education techniques, like media and technology education, work in a developing nation like Haiti? Using the qualitative research methods already mentioned, I studied the current and potential future models for education in Haiti. I will address the roles that unconventional education techniques can play in this developing nation environment. I will also study what current media education is being done in Haiti, and the impact it is having on the youth of the country. A secondary outcome question is whether digital technology education can relieve the poverty of the youth in Haiti. Is advanced technical education enough to change the outcome of a select few? Or are the problems too much to overcome by education? Another secondary question explores whether children of developing nations have the same abilities to grasp technology that their western counterparts do? Are media technological tasks too much of a learning curve for students only familiar with traditional techniques? I traveled all over the small but mountainous country of Haiti to ask these key research questions, and to observe some of these unconventional techniques in practice.

Organization of Chapters

The data I collected while in Haiti, as well as in relevant literature, will be presented in this study in the following four chapters. To accurately examine the topic this study will present the history of Haiti that has led to its current condition, the current state of education in Haiti, the impact of media on Haitians and the Haitian culture, the work being done in other developing countries with unconventional digital media technology education, the work being done in a few media schools in Haiti, and how

some of these new education techniques can impact the poverty of Haiti. Chapter two will explore the breath of literature available addressing the use of digital media technology in developing nation's classrooms. This section will also explore other research studies, as well as the most recent articles available on this topic. Chapter three will examine the methodology used to acquire data for this study. This section will explain the qualitative methods used as well as present how the various methods were implemented in the gathering and evaluation of the data that addresses the research questions. Chapter four is a discussion of the data gathered during the time of research in Haiti. This chapter also presents the findings of, the open-ended question interviews of "experts" from Haiti, the participant observation data in Haiti, and a complete organization of the qualitative research information into categories. The fifth chapter of this study makes conclusions and summaries based on the main ideas in the previous four chapters. It also presents associations of the data analysis to the research questions. This section presents limitations of the study and recommendations for future study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The study in effects of technology in education within the context of a developing nation is a new phenomenon in the last ten years. There have long been studies regarding technology in developed nation classrooms. Introducing computer technology enhances the education and overall culture and economy of a nation-state. However, the impact of education technology on poverty in third world countries is a more recent focus of study. I chose Haiti as my developing nation of study and I will argue that Haiti too, can benefit from the introduction of computer and media technology in its education system. In addition to the media technology education studies it is important to consider cultural contexts. Therefore, literature and studies regarding the culture and historical background of Haiti is relevant to consider in this research. This chapter will explore and argue the inclusion of media and computer technology in education systems of developing nations.

Historical Background

It's vital to understand first how Haiti became the most impoverished nation in the western hemisphere in order to study the impact of media technology on the youth of Haiti, and the cultural context that Haiti's education system operates in. As referenced in chapter one the history of Haiti is rich with turmoil and tragedy (Farmer, 1994, p. 64). It is this history that has influenced Haiti's current condition of poverty and third world status (Dash, 2001, p. 11). From a nation of slaves to a nation of freed slaves governing the country in a few short years offers its own challenges (Farmer, 1994, p.72). Almost immediately there was political instability between the mulattos and the former slaves (Farmer, 1994, p. 72). In addition to the split between peasants and the established

mulatto elite, the new self-governing black Haiti was met with hostility in the rest of the world (Farmer, 1994, p. 72). This would begin a long history of distrust and instability in the governing of Haiti. One of the few times the country was united across color and class divides occurred when Haitians had a common enemy during the United States military occupation from 1915 – 1934 (Dash, 2001, pp. 12-15). Outside of that time an environment of distrust and a class system has kept progress at bay in Haiti (Dash, 2001, p. 31). Therefore, it is no surprise that the country possesses one of the worst educational systems in the world (Salmi, 1998, p. 135). This fact is well documented by the continued lack of literacy in Haiti (Salmi, 1998, p. 135). These political factors contribute a direct affect on the education system of Haiti and this fact is not lost on the international community. However, the problems of Haiti are so great and the corruption of the government is so prevalent that progress in the area of education is slow (Salmi, 1998, p. 136). What exists is a network of unconnected private schools that are religious or missionary affiliated. The public school system in Haiti only serves the top ten percent, the elite class' children (Haiti, 2009). Leaving the private school system unregulated and unaccountable. There are no education standards in Haiti. If a child gets an education at all they are the fortunate minority. Only sixty five percent of primary school aged children attend primary school and only thirty five percent of them will complete primary school (Haiti, 2009).

Cultural Background

The culture of Haiti is complex and unusually unique for being the only Latin American country with a language and culture that is predominantly French and a population that is predominantly of African decent. On the island of Hispaniola sits two

countries that could not be more opposite of one another. Haiti with its French and African influence and the Dominican Republic with its Spanish and Latin American influence. The cultures of the two nations share very little in common other than the fact they share the same land mass. The Haitian culture is deep rooted in its African heritage (Dash, 2001, p. 30). Studies of the Haitian cultural from an anthropological point of view are few and far between (Dash, 2001, p. 30). The most popular of these attempts in modern time came from the anthropologist and ethnographers in the 1940's in the works of Melville Herskovits, Harold Courlander, and Alfred Metraux (Dash, 2001, p. 30). A void occurred during the Duvalier dynasty due to government control on information until 1986 when Haitian accounts started to emerge (Dash, 2001, pp. 30-31). *Culture and Customs of Haiti* by J. Michael Dash (2001) is a volume that explores the complexities and cultural underpinnings of Haitian society. Dash (2001) documents the unusual fact that despite the poverty and illiteracy of Haiti, more books have been published by Haitian authors than any other Caribbean nation (p. 95). One of the more popular authors is Edwidge Danticat who has written many novels exploring Haitian stories and culture. She has written eight different books since 1994 (Dash, 2001, p. 114) Her book *Brother I am Dying* is a first hand account of the cultural differences between the western world and the Haitian world. Her other novels are regarded as some of the best exhortation of Haitian culture in modern literature (Dash, 2001, p. 114).

Media and Computer Technology Enhancing Education and Culture

Since the introduction of the calculator, technology has become a fixture in our modern classroom. As technology has advanced, the western world's education system has slowly adopted it. From the reel-to-reel 16mm films to VCRs to DVDs media

technology has also infused the modern education system. The last ten years have brought an explosion of computer and other technologies introduced in education curriculum all over the world. Online classes are now taking place over the internet. Assignments are handed in electronically instead of on paper. Student and instructor's communication has been revolutionized by email and online chat services. Elementary students are now using computers to learn math, language, and other building blocks of education. From pre-school to doctoral programs technology is the norm not the exception in education systems of developed nations (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 83). In direct correlation to this fact is how children have been socialized in a media infused society with mediated communication (Carlsson, 2008, p. 15). The youth of most developed nations live, breathe, and consume more media than their adult counterparts (Carlsson, 2008, p. 15). Thus media technology in education is not just a novel device but an important tool of learning and discovery (Carlsson, 2008, p. 15). Computers and the use of mediated technologies have transformed education and the need for different skill sets in the world economy (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 83). As technology and media have moved into the classroom, has it enhanced education and culture? I will first argue the benefits of media in the classroom and then technology.

The argument for media in the classroom has been a long debate. Many educators view media technology as an entertainment platform, and entertainment has no business in a school (Carlsson, 2008, p. 25). However, it is becoming increasingly evident that we are a visual society. It may be stated best in *Empowerment Through Media Education* (2008):

Ultimately, media education provides the critical knowledge and the analytical tools that will empower media consumers to function as autonomous and rational citizens, enabling them to critically make use of the media. Media education helps to make people well-informed and responsible citizens, who will be able to take a certain distance towards the immediate pleasures that media can provide. (p. 15)

While media is shaping the everyday meanings and practices of our youth culture, it becomes relevant to consider media education as serious as formal education (Carlsson, 2008, p. 15). IQ test research has confirmed our visual intelligence has risen for the last one hundred years (Greenfield, 2009, p. 69).

Another consideration in this argument is information literacy skills. Carlsson (2008) defines information literacy as, "...the skill to use information and communication technologies and their applications to access and create information." (p. 17). This goes beyond just knowing how to operate a computer and accessing information to critically reflect on information and put it into relevant contexts (Carlsson, 2008, p. 17). Media education is inside information literacy. The old and new media is now converging into one culture. The online-networked communication tools of YouTube, Wikipedia, and Facebook are converging with an established media society (Carlsson, 2008, p. 17). This convergence has also created a media culture that not only consumes but now produces their own content as well. This is referred to as media pluralism (Carlsson, 2008, p. 17). Young students today have a separate media culture from their education culture, which emphasizes the importance of media education in our school systems (Carlsson, 2008, p. 16). The skills of collaboration are increasingly important in a world that is ever more interconnected:

Media education can foster new educational practices and pedagogies, especially related to collaborative work, project-oriented productions and new forms of evaluation. (Carlsson, 2008, p. 18).

There can be common ground between communication and education through knowledge and awareness nurtured through media education (Carlsson, 2008, p. 18). Besides the educational benefits of media on education there are empowerment and cultural benefits as well.

Media use has become less a matter of consumption and transitioned to an activity (Carlsson, 2008, p. 19). In more recent developments media literacy has been connected to social and political progress (Carlsson, 2008, p. 21). Media has also been recognized as a vital factor for political, economical, social, and cultural development.” (Carlsson, 2008, p. 19). Media literate citizens are preconditioned with the skills to strengthen critical thinking and communicative abilities. This enables individuals to use media as a construct to articulate processes of progress as well as social change, improving individuals everyday lives and empowering citizens to influence their own lives (Carlsson, 2008, p. 11). The affect media has on a culture is well documented in developed nations where media has been embraced. Mass media influences social opinions in a given culture more than any other factor (Carlsson, 2008, p. 129). Therefore, as media literacy and education increase, the citizens of a given culture also benefit.

Media education is not however, without its trade offs. There is growing concern in the religious world that media can be at odds with culture, that we may be using media to replace culture (Carlsson, 2008, p. 129). These concerns can inhibit the inclusion of media education into these societies. Studies have also shown that even though there is an

increase of visual intelligence there has been a decline in abstract vocabulary skills (Greenfield, 2009, p. 69). It is also important to note that media education is not an end all solution to the educational problems of society. Neither Media education nor traditional education can do everything, each medium has its strengths and weaknesses (Greenfield, 2009, p. 71). However, they can both coexist in an education environment by building off of their strengths. Visual forms of media may have a positive impact on increased visual intelligence, however, the deep procession: mindful knowledge acquisition, inductive analysis, critical thinking, imagination, and reflection are the cost of that progress. Therefore, it can be difficult for schools to teach reflective and critical thinking when the informal education of youth is through visual media (Greenfield, 2009, p. 71). This is why it is important for students to receive a balanced media diet of visual, auditory, and reading (Greenfield, 2009, p. 71). Media in most cases is a means, not an end. While media impacts culture and society, it is only a tool used by citizens of that society. If the tool is abused or misunderstood it becomes a negative impact. Media education of the world's youth is critical to avoid this disaster.

Related to media is the influx of computers in the classroom in the last decade. The push for more technology in the classroom is in direct response to the changing global economic climate. We have become a global society, more connected then ever before because of technology (Carlsson, 2008, p. 155). This technology has opened up pathways of information, knowledge, and communication (Shneiderman, 2003, p. 37). Computers in classrooms of developed countries are now commonplace. Children are starting to use computers at home before they are even well versed at talking. We live in a new digital world, and these digital devices connect us globally more then ever before

in our human history. How then does all this technology impact education systems? As with most technology in education, computers were not adopted as a useful tool as quickly as the rest of the world adopted them. Classroom computers were relegated to educational games and typing lessons in the 1980's and early 1990's (Schacter, 1999). Former Apple Inc. CEO, John Sculley, said this about computers potential in the classroom:

“Imagine a classroom with a window on all of the world's knowledge. Imagine a student with the power to visit any place on earth at any time in history. Imagine a screen that can display in vivid color the inner workings of a cell, the births and deaths of stars, the clashes of armies and the triumphs of art.”... “I believe that all this will happen not simply because people have the capability to make it happen, but also because people have a compelling need to make it happen.” (Carlsson, 2008, pp. 161-162).

Computers are a gateway to knowledge and a connection to our world, and are most apt to serve this purpose in an educational environment. In recent years this push to put computers in classrooms all over the world has been driven by equity concerns, economic factors, and need for education reform (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 82). With prices per unit for computers dropping, specifically laptop computers, the viability of conducting wide spread laptop programs in school systems has become a reality (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 83). These programs more commonly provide laptop computers for every student in a given school or school system. Studies of these programs have shown an increase in student engagement with academic work and an increase in technology skills of students and teachers (Zucker & Light, 2009, pp. 83-84). There are other positives that deal with

more specific educational applications. For instance, studies have shown that word processing computer applications have increased the writing ability of students (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84). Some science and laboratory simulators have also shown to have benefits for students (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84). In the “Laptop Programs for Students” article of *Science* (2009) there is an analysis of recent studies done on the effects of laptops on education in the classroom. In this article there is a reference to a review of thirty different studies of laptop programs. The studies measuring learning outcomes showed consistent and positive effects on students’ writing skills (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84).

Computers are a unique tool in the education arsenal. This multipurpose machine can be a library, a model of invisible phenomena, a communication tool, a link to other devices around the world, a device students use for creation of knowledge presentations, and much more (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84). The success of laptop and computer programs in education is not dependent on the outcome of learning on the students; it is only by the accomplishment of the initial goals set forth before the program begins. Clear education, social and cultural goals need to be in place before attempting a laptop program.

Laptops themselves will not educate children. Teachers and parents educate. A laptop is just a tool to facilitate education (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 84). This is the mindset of one of the better-known laptop programs in the world, the aforementioned One Laptop Per Child program. As explored in chapter one, Negroponte’s mission and goal is to see that the poorest of the poor receive an education (Talbot, 2008, p. 62). He sees this education facilitated through a laptop. It is also Negroponte’s belief that

knowledge and education is not just for the privileged few, but it is a right of all citizens of the world (Markoff, 2006). This leads to the next argument that the same impact of media and education technology can happen in a developing nation and therefore can happen in Haiti.

Benefits of Media and Education Technology on Haiti

I have made an argument for the benefit of media and education technology. However, placing this same technology and curriculum in a third world environment like Haiti brings other complexities to the situation. Is technology doomed to fail in Haiti because of the lack of infrastructure, political stability, and a modern education system? I would like to argue that you could maximize your gains by investing technology in a culture that lacks even some of the basic technologies that we take for granted. For example if you introduce a laptop in a education void in a mountain village of Haiti you are not just giving a child access to knowledge you are giving that same access to that child's entire family (Talbot, 2008, pp. 62-63). By installing laptops and internet in a remote village there is now a library in that village, a communication device to the world, and information resources previously unattainable (Talbot, 2008, p. 68).

Already many rural information and communications technologies programs happening in developing nations are focusing on individuals as direct beneficiaries of technology (Parikh, 2009, p. 54). This is especially true in relation to the improvement of rural education in third world communities. At the same time, in many developing nations there is great need for reform of their educational systems to help create a more democratic, participatory and responsible society. These countries see technology as a key to change in their education systems (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 83). It is also in the

best economical sense for a country like Haiti to educate a workforce of the future. In order for Haiti to compete in a global marketplace it needs skilled labors that can perform technical tasks. Without reforms in their educational system their workforce will remain technology illiterate as well as media illiterate (Talbot, 2008, p. 66).

The computer also acts as a gateway to media technology. The laptop's flexibility is one of its main strengths. As a media device a laptop can turn Haitian youth into producers of content as well as consumers. This has great implications in human rights. Children who are connected to the world have access to media information on what their rights, as children should be. The laptop provides an outlet to express their point of view on the subject or to report their hardships (Carlsson, 2008, p. 175). I am purposefully using the term human rights loosely, because the impact of third world children sharing their story with a global community breaks walls and barriers that have existed in Haiti for its entire history. As long as teachers are well supported and the equipment is well maintained there is evidence that success can happen with media and technology implementation in a third world environment (Talbot, 2008, pp. 62-65) (Carlsson, 2008, p. 178). Children in third world countries need to see a future that is not cyclical but rather a hope that they can achieve a life outside of poverty. A laptop can give these children a greater worldview and educational opportunities to better succeed in the world economy (Talbot, 2008, p. 62).

In Haiti I also observed a hunger for learning and knowledge. Haitians are very adept at surviving and if education is a way to survive then they will learn quickly. Their culture values education, which is not the problem. The problem is a lack of public education that is affordable to the poor and peasants of their society. Media has shown

promise in Haiti to have an influence on the people to bring about change. Haitians understand media, but they view it as something that happens outside of their personal world. They see media as something that affects them, but not something they can affect (Talbot, 2008, p. 66). Haiti is a country of media consumers and not active participants. Media education can work in Haiti because at a basic level I was able to understand their grasp of the power of the medium. Those who I observed in media training schools were passionate about the ability to produce local media for their culture. This attitude was reflected in every area of the country that I visited. With such potential in media literacy the gains outweigh the obstacles.

Gaps in Research

Despite the renewed interest in media and education technology influences in a third world society, there is still much research that can be done. Many of the results of effectiveness in laptop programs are incomplete. This is due in part to the complexity and cost of a large data set test (Zucker & Light, 2009, pp. 82-83). Few of these types of result-based researches exist. It is hard to make assumptions on educational values evidence in computer/laptop programs. Many of these programs have different social and educational goals and a meta-analysis of all of them would be unreliable (Zucker & Light, 2009, p. 83). Another gap in research is the affects of media and education technology on third world education systems. The most documented of these affects is in relationship with the OLPC project do to its popularity. Outside of that research is very thin on what impact media and technology can have on an impoverished nation.

Research Questions

Through a review of literature and research the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1) Does introducing computer and media technology enhance the education and overall culture/economy of a nation-state, especially underdeveloped ones?

RQ2) Can Haiti benefit from the introduction of computer and media technology in its educational system?

Conclusion

The literature review explores a wide range in the research area. Due to the gaps stated in this chapter there is no specific research regarding this thesis study area. However, there is enough background research in the areas of technology in developing nations educational systems to provide a point of departure for this research. Interesting results from both the OLPC project as well as other technology programs conducted in Africa have sparked an interest in this subject area of education and cultural reform in developing nations. Enough of these benefits have been recently published that indicate technology has the potential for profound effects in the educational landscape of third world nations. The cultural context of applying this to Haiti is well documented in this literature review. Given the fact there are more published books by Haitians than any other Caribbean nation, is of note when considering the availability of information regarding this culture. Unlike the lack of research that is available on Haiti, there is a vast amount of literature on the culture of Haiti. The sample literature I have used in this study was the most comprehensive, relevant, recent, and detailed literature available for my study. Looking at the impact of technology on education in the available research and

applying that to the cultural context background literature provides this study with a starting foundation.

Chapter III: Methods

When approaching a subject to study the researcher has certain choices to make in regards to how to perceive and how to report these perceptions and understandings of the perceptions. Some cases would allow for a quantitative analysis and scientific study to establish social patterns. In other cases, a researcher needs to report more than the behavior observed. Sometimes the study requires the researcher to capture the experiences and lifestyles of another culture in their natural environment and understand and live these same experiences and lifestyles. The observations about Haiti suggested in chapter two of this analysis indicate there are enough differences between the experience of North Americans in the United States and the Central American people of Haiti to consider a research approach that not only informs, but seeks to create a sensitivity to a culture that is dramatically different than the United States. Accordingly, in this chapter, a shift from a quantitative to qualitative approach is suggested, followed by an outline on specific procedures for data collection in Haiti. As the description of these procedures unfold, the particular data base for drawing conclusions about Haiti are also identified. In all, the role of the researcher shifts from purely observer to both observer and participant, with both roles shaping what is reported and understood about the actual and potential educational system in Haiti.

While data collection procedures are identified in this chapter, it is also appropriate to note at the outset that conditions in Haiti require that some immediate limitations in data collection should be highlighted immediately. While these limitations are revisited in chapter five more completely, at this juncture it is also apt to note that the

“hard data” that exists on the impact of media technology in Haiti is either incomplete or inaccurate making it very difficult to perform a critical analysis of the available data and literature on my research question. As a result, I felt it necessary to do field research in person in Haiti to gain a perspective on how people communicate in their natural environments (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 451). A qualitative research study could address my thesis question in measurable ways through my interaction and observations of the culture I was immersed in.

Qualitative vs Quantitative

As stated in chapter one, the objective of this study is twofold, (1) Assess how media and technology educational techniques could work in Haiti, but also to (2) Sensitize North Americans to the unusual and extraordinary environment and sociopolitical system in which media and technology must function in a culture such as Haiti. With this dual purpose in mind, it would be difficult to use any kind of quantitative research method in a third world environment such as Haiti. The issue of literacy itself is a critical and unique factor to consider when deciding whether to employ a quantitative or qualitative research method in Haiti. If a researcher is tempted to develop and distribute a written questionnaire to measure the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the Haitian people, it is first appropriate to review the Global Peace Index (2008) report that almost fifty percent of the people of Haiti are illiterate. Indeed, so many of the research measures related to social scientific methods presume educational, cultural, and political contexts that simply do not exist in Haiti. Additionally, only a small percentage of the population possesses the educational level that is required to complete a survey or question (Dash, 2001, p. 81). With such a small percentage of the population possessing

an education level high enough to complete a survey or questionnaire it would make the data set unreliable. Another factor was the unknowns in the research question. I am proposing information about media education that could help the people of Haiti. With this type of education in Haiti being scarce, individuals drawn and questioned from the Haitian culture would simply lack a frame of reference on the topic of media education.

Indeed, when the full meaning of a qualitative perspective is adopted – a perspective that Bruyn (1969) has called “the human perspective” – the goal is not only to determine how media and technology might be more effectively used in the Haitian educational system, but also to determine if there are opportunities to use media and technology education as a way to raise the quality of life in Haiti. A quantitative study would have been incomplete in addressing personal objectives, as well as personal association of human communication interaction to defined cultural labels (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 451).

Questions about validity and reliability can also come into play with the use of quantitative research in the method of data collection. The four psychologists – Sellitiz, Jahoda, Deutsch, and Cook – defined a set of factors that could adversely affect the data gathered in surveys. They identified these factors as *reactive effects* (Sellitiz, Jahoda, Deutsch, and Cook, 1959). A research design is reactive when the design itself—not the subjects—determine and affect what data are obtained. Accordingly, these reactive effects explicitly suggest that the act of measuring the data, the way the measurement was taken, how the data was sampled, and who was measured could influence and determine the results of the experiment (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 458).

Severyn Bruyn (1966) in his book, *The Human Perspective in Sociology*, has suggested how important it is for scientists to enter into the lives of their subjects to obtain a personal understanding of their position (Bruyn, 1966, p. 7). More broadly, Chesebro and Borisoff (2008) define the qualitative researcher as:

Fundamentally, qualitative researchers seek to preserve and analyze the situated form, content, and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations. (p. 452)

The social action and interaction were key to my understanding of the Haitian people in their own environment. Therefore, to study them effectively I needed to observe their communication habits in everyday life situations. To take advantage of my time in Haiti, I needed to be immersed in the culture as much as possible explore the possibility of media education in this developing nation.

Five qualitative research methods were employed in this study. They included: participant observation, focus groups, simple observation, open-ended question, and triangulation or multiple class measurements (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 459). In doing a field research in Haiti I was able to obtain a “first hand observation” (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 452). This first hand observation involved interviewing subjects in the field as a participant and a nonparticipant. Jack Douglas (1976) defined the participant and nonparticipant as this:

The “participant field researcher” approach employs depth-probe field research, investigative reporting, and detective work. Covert field research, overt journalism and police work, and overt field research. The “nonparticipant field

research” approach employs discussion (free-flowing), in-depth interviews, and in-depth interviews with flexible checklists of questions. (p. 15)

The use of both approaches was utilized in my study of media education and media impact in Haiti and provided a wider base of observed data. I had to become familiar with their culture as well as be able to interact inside their culture to gain the observations I needed for this study. I used both the research I did before arriving in Haiti and the aid of confederates, who I traveled with to accomplish this. By associating myself with members of the established community, I was able to gain acceptance much easier than I would have been able to otherwise.

Participant Observation

One qualitative method I used while in Haiti was participant observation. Participant observation has one of the longest histories of all qualitative research methods (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 465). The origin of the method can be linked back to anthropologist Frederick LePlay in 1855 (Bruyn, 1966, p. 9). It was not used as a technique for qualitative study until 1918 by researchers William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 465). In 1942 participant observation was employed explicitly as a research method in a scholarly publication. Edward C. Lindeman (1924) put it this way in his book, *Social Discovery: An Approach to the Study of Functional Groups*:

For experimental purposes the cooperation observers have been called “participant observers.” The term implies not that the observers are participation in the activities of the group being observed... There are few such persons available and those who are must be trained. Such training involves its own

difficulties. Shall the participant observer be trained to look for exactly the same factors, which the observer from the outside seeks? This method would inevitably lead to error for the participant observer should be free to see many things that the outsider can never see. (p. 191)

Within this context, a participant observer is identified as a researcher who can “obtain more data in their dual role as participant and observer than would be possible by observation alone.” (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 465). By the time Bruyn (1966) wrote a complete analysis of the method in his book, *The Human Perspective in Sociology*, participant observation was regarded as a potentially coherent, complete, and verifiable method (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 466).

A major advantage of the participant observation method in my research was how well it had been adapted as a research technique to natural everyday communication environments. I needed to discover how impactful mass media was in Haiti and to observe, if possible, the effects of mass media and technology on the immediate educational processes and outcomes. Because of the incomplete research reports and even explicit gaps in the analysis of Haitian education, it was crucial for me to be involved in the Haitian’s “everyday communication” (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 468). In order to understand how mass media communication affects the daily lives of Haitians, I became convinced the direct observation and involvement – insofar as it was possible – in the Haitian educational process was a compelling goal as a researcher. In this way, I became a “dual role” researcher (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 468). While serving as a researcher observing subjects, I also had to become a part of the community by assuming an ongoing role as a participant within the community, adopting and living by the rules

that governed the community. This was the only way to effectively study how the Haitians interact with media and communication in every day life. In this regard, I recorded my findings in a physical journal, online journal, digital photographs, and digital video. Fortunately, I was able to maintain a manner of anonymity in most community situations. For the most part the subjects I was observing either thought I was a tourist or was with a Non Government Organization (NGO) [NGO is any organization that is humanitarian and not sponsored by any government entity]. However, if I was asked point blank I was truthful about my reasons for being in that community in the hopes it would build trust between the subjects and myself. My intent in these communities was to not intrude or disrupt but to simply observe the interactions.

Bruyn (1966) laid out three axioms, or “facts of research experience” (p. 13) that a participant observation researcher encounters.

The first of these axioms is; “The participant observer share in the life activities and sentiments of people in face-to-face relationships.” (Bruyn, 1966, p. 13). With this axiom comes a level of detachment as well as personal involvement in order to be a participant observer in a foreign culture (Bruyn, 1966, p. 14).

Axiom two is stated as such: “The participant observer is a normal part of the culture and the life of the people under observation” (Bruyn, 1966, p.15). In this axiom Bruyn (1966) includes four types of roles the participant observer falls into:

1. Complete Participant. In this role, the observer’s activities as such are wholly concealed.
2. Participant as Observer. In this role, the fieldworker’s observer activities are not wholly concealed, but are “kept under wraps” as it were, or subordinated

to activities as participant, activities which give the people in the situation their main bases for evaluating the fieldworker in his role.

3. Observer as Participant. This is the role in which the observer's activities as such are made publicly known at the outset, are more or less publicly sponsored by the people in the situation studied, and are intentionally not "kept under wraps."
4. Complete Observer. This describes a range of roles in which, at one extreme, the observer hides behind a one-way mirror, ... and at the other extreme, his activities are completely public in a special kind of theoretical group where there are "no secrets"... (pp.15-16)

I would classify my research technique as "observer as participant" or per Bruyn's three approaches to participant observation. Even though I did not always make my intentions known it was not a secret as to what I was doing. As stated before, if I was asked I would answer truthfully about my intentions.

Axiom three is: The role of the participant observer reflects the social process of living in society (Bruyn, 1966, p. 20). I experienced this fact multiple times in Haiti. It was common for me to participate in common social processes of that community. One example of this was in the use of radio. I could conclude meaning behind the use of radio in a local setting that could then relate to a more universal conclusion for the region if I observed this behavior in context to the universal culture of Haiti. Those are the definitions and the how behind participant observation. We can now look at critically analyzing the data collected.

One of my primary goals in Haiti was to observe a traditional school environment. I got this opportunity in the northern Haitian town of Cap Haitien. I was connected with a missionary, Prichard Adams, who has lived in Haiti for over twenty years operating a private school in the slums of Cap Haitien. He allowed me to observe their school. I was only there for a few hours, but in those few hours I was able to play the role of the outside visitor. Since this school has many visitors come through it was not unusual for me to be there. While in this role I was able to see how the school operated and what the structures were like. My observations are of course in comparison to my North American understanding of a school. The classrooms were very simple with benches and sometimes individual desks. There were very few additional resources available in the classrooms besides the basics: chalk board, lesson books, writing utensils, and paper. Their library was very modest at best, with few new books. Most of what they had was old and outdated. However, it was a well-used library from what I could observe. All of the children were given reading materials and lesson books by the school. The school also provided some of the basic curriculum that we would find in North America. They had language, music, math and science classes, as well as literature classes. This would be an unacceptable school in North America, but in Cap Haitien it was an above average institution.

Another top goal while in Haiti was to visit and participate in at least one of the few media schools that I knew of in Haiti. I was fortunate enough to get this opportunity on my third day in Haiti at Radio Lumiere and TV Lumiere. These two media outlets are located in a town just south of Port Au Prince called Carrefour. Carrefour is well known for its extreme high percentage of HIV per capita. Radio Lumiere has long been a

religious broadcasting station, and has also become the voice of Haiti as most radio stations have been taken over by the government and turned into state run stations. Recently Radio Lumiere started a TV station called TV Lumiere and created a media school to train the future broadcasters of Haiti. In this environment I worked with one of their instructors, assisting in some instruction. We spent all day at TV Lumiere helping the students with their projects as well as talking with them about their goals, missions and objectives with the TV station. I saw how much the Haitians are behind developed nations in adopting mass media television as a communication tool. However, I also got to see how excited and passionate they were about the work they were trying to accomplish.

Their ingenuity and utilization of resources were also impressive. They were able to convert a small room into a fully functioning control room and studio, with limited equipment, at their disposal. From what I could observe their most important asset was their support staff. Their main engineer and instructor, Killick Aristide, is well educated and provided the kind of support and nurturing the students and staff needed in that type of environment. I was also permitted to videotape while I was there. This allowed me to have a unique capture of what I observed to review later. I also used a journal to record observations and interactions. One interesting observation was how the students placed importance on variety and quantity of programming, and quality would get better as they learned more. This is in stark contrast to the way television stations operate in North America. A television program is only aired if it passes some level of quality assurance. Also in the instructor role I had to throw out my assumptions of a media professional and focus on making sure I was explaining everything in enough detail. Their understanding

of media technology along with computers was very basic. However, just because they lacked computer skills and media literacy did not diminish their creativity. I viewed some amazingly creative concepts and projects in my short time at the school. However, their execution of these ideas and concepts lacked refinement and polish, which affected the projects professional look.

In Cap Haitian I participated in a demonstration of a recording mixing session at a radio station called 4VEH. This environment was much different than Radio Lumiere. 4VEH had updated and well maintained equipment. They were also producing their own music, which is very unusual in Haiti. There are very few Haitian musicians with commercially produced albums. Those that exist usually leave Haiti to do so. I was able to play the role of the observer participant where I was only there to see how they did the mixing of audio, and the Haitians that were there accepted this role. I was impressed by not only the equipment they had but their proficiency in using it. Within an hour the audio engineer showed me how he mixed a studio-recorded band. I was amazed at how skillful he was at using the media equipment to achieve a professional level recording. In an environment as harsh and depressed as Haiti, this kind of media interaction is in stark contrast to the socioeconomic climate and culture.

On my fifth day I participated in helping shoot and consult on the set of a local Haitian TV show called La Bonne Nouvelle. This show is produced and directed by an American who has become a Haitian for all practical purposes. He has lived in Haiti since 1975 and has learned their language (Creole) and their culture. His weekly TV show is aired all over Haiti as well as in Miami and West Palm Beach. It is a show about the positive people and places of Haiti. We got to participate on his show by shooting his

new intro on the streets of Port Au Prince and by shooting a segment for the show. As the role of the media specialist I got to observe what goes into shooting a local television show in Haiti. Much more than in the United States, Haitians are mesmerized by a camera. At one point we had to find a vacant side street to shoot the intro because we were attracting a crowd. Cameras and equipment are not something Haitians get to experience or participate with on a regular basis, especially where we were. The individuals we ran into were for the most part very curious and just wanted to be a part of what we were doing. However, most did not want to be in the video or to have their pictures taken without some coaxing. I was well accepted as the media professional in this environment, despite standing out from the crowd due to my skin color.

Focus Groups

Several times in Haiti I was able to employ the use of the focus group method. This method is defined by:

...bringing together a group, or, more often, a series of groups, of subjects to discuss an issue in the presence of a moderator. A moderator ensures that the discussion remains on the issue at hand, while electing a wide range of opinions on that issue. (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 462)

In most cases when I used focus groups it was an organic initiation. As a researcher in a foreign culture it was difficult for me to plan focus group times. The culture of Haiti does not allow for this type of organization. The people are suspicious about outsiders asking them questions. Therefore, to have a focus group situation I needed to create an environment of trust and comfort. In the two situations where this occurred I waited till there was a level of comfort between the subjects and myself before I would approach a

focus group type involvement. The first one happened as a result of my participant observation role at Radio and TV Lumiere. After getting to know some of the students I was able to conduct an informal focus group with them. We gathered in a common area and I started to ask questions of the group to get them engaged in the discussion. I asked questions regarding media in Haiti, and the education system in Haiti. I asked if their education in media broadcasting at TV Lumiere would provide them a different future from a one of poverty like most of their peers were experiencing.

The answers I garnered were not surprising. Most of them agreed that media was important to Haiti and important in helping Haiti with its problems. They all felt a considerable blessing to have the education they were receiving in comparison to some of their contemporaries. One answer to a question did surprise me. I asked if they knew of any other media schools. One answered that he had been to a media workshop school for a few days. These types of programs are somewhat common in the larger cities in Haiti. He told me these programs charged a lot of money, relatively, to go to these workshops, and once he was there the instructors only showed the very basics. Even when asked about more advanced techniques they did not respond. The members of my focus group explained this is because if others knew the profession of media then they would be a threat to the instructors. In other words these workshops are advertised as a way to learn media technologies, however, they end up actually teaching very little of the technologies further perpetuating the media illiteracy.

Simple Observation

The name of this method goes a long way in explaining how it can be used. This method was created to provide a way for researchers to collect data in a natural setting of

the subjects they are studying, without disrupting their everyday communication (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 473). In many ways I used this method more than any other, because I was performing simple observation everywhere I went and everyone I saw either in the car or walking in the streets. This data gathering technique is not enough in itself to rely upon. Yet in combination with other methods and data simple observation can provide insights into human communication from a heuristic approach (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 473).

We had to drive to get to most places in Haiti. Therefore, a lot of our time was spent riding in a vehicle and I spent all of that time watching what was happening around me. I observed that the kids dressed in uniforms were in school, but if I saw a large group of children without uniforms it meant they were either street kids or had no money for school. I saw people bathing in the rivers, and washing their clothes and dishes in these same rivers, because of a lack of running water. There are many more cell phone users in Haiti than traditional telephone hard line users (Global Link Database, 2002). The large number of street vendor cell phone salesmen and cell phone billboards made this fact even more evident. Throughout Haiti no matter where we were there was always someone on the street selling an old TV or radio. Most communities we would drive through would have at least on street side TV where a mass of people would be gathered around to watch a soccer game or Haitian news. Through simple observation I gained perspective into the culture of Haiti as well as the interaction of media within this culture. Again, alone these observations are not complete but they provide even more data to the research.

Open-Ended Questions

In gaining a deeper understanding of the Haitian culture and the impact of media in their society, I needed to perform interviews all over the country. My interviews were all video and audio recorded with the permission of the subject. I used video and audio recordings to preserve the verbal and non-verbal communication data of the interview. The interviewee never talked to the camera and was always in conversation with the researcher in order to keep the camera as unobtrusive as possible. While the camera could have been an intimidating factor to the subject, I always gave the subject the option to not use the camera. From my observations all of my subjects were comfortable with the camera recording their answers. The risk of the camera influencing the data was acceptable due to the invaluable data the camera could provide. These interviews were conducted in an open-ended question method. Chesebro and Borisoff (2008) define this method in, *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication*:

An open-ended question is an interrogative sentence asked of subjects in a natural setting that is designed to permit spontaneous and unguided responses and that allows subjects to offer an qualifiers, contingencies, or introduce an situational variables they see fit to provide when answering the question. (p. 460)

This method allows the subject to formulate their own data in the answering of the questions, thus providing information and insights that cannot be obtained by a standard questionnaire. By asking open-ended questions I was able to, in many cases, achieve data about the culture and human communication that I would not otherwise have obtained. These questions also allowed the subject to correct the language of the question. If my English question did not translate well into Creole the method allowed for the subject to clarify what I was asking, a freedom that quantitative cannot offer.

In conducting the open-ended question interviews, there were four focal points to consider: (1) Retain a natural setting, (2) Create and sustain a parasocial or friendship relationship, (3) Be sure no time and space restrictions are built into the questions; and, (4) Be sure the subjects have an opportunity to qualify their answers as they wish (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, pp. 460-461). Natural Setting refers to where the interview takes place, and part of what defines an open-ended question interview is that it takes place in the subject's personal/natural environment. Some might consider the fact that all of my interviews took place in Haiti would be enough to consider them a natural setting. However, to keep the integrity of the research all of my interviews were conducted on the spot where my subjects lived, worked, or socialized.

The next focal point, Parasocial Relationship, refers to the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Chesebro and Borisoff (2008) describe this relationship, "In a parasocial relationship, the subjects feel that the researcher is a 'friend' who is a part of the 'circle of one's peers.'" (p. 460). I was usually able to accomplish this relationship through my travel guide. I would also lean on the acquaintances of my guide who lived in Haiti and could translate the different languages. I also benefited from my nationality. Americans are trusted in Haiti because of their influence and money. This trust relationship was a crucial element to the questioning of the subject. Without the trust and openness, the interview would stall and answers would not be as complete and detailed. As the researcher I could immediately sense when that openness did not exist. Those interviews yielded less substance than the ones where more intimacy was present.

A more complex focal point of open-ended questions is *no time and space restrictions built into the question*. This is in regards to the structure of the questions so

as to not restrict the time and space of the answer. Accordingly, the interviewer must provide a context for a response which necessarily requires and forces the interviewee to provide a space and time construct to the answer (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 461). As a researcher this can be a challenge. However, it is essential maintain in order to not influence the answer in anyway. Therefore the integrity of the details in the answer remains. It can become easy for a researcher to feed answers to the subject after the parasocial relationship has been established. This is why the time and space focal point is important to use in the formulation of questions.

Subjects feel they can qualify their answers as they wish, is the final focal point. In the interview process subjects should feel that they can completely qualify any of their answers (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 461). In part, this is the researcher limiting the interruptions on the subjects' answers accomplishes this. The fourth focal point is also important for its ability to allow the subject to be spontaneous and unguided in their answers. During my interviews I found this focal point to be the most valuable of them all. The freedom of the subject to fully explain their answer to the open-ended question resulted in a more detailed and data rich answer. It was my goal to make sure my subjects had completely finished their answer before I moved on. As well as a good research technique, it is also respectful of the subject. This is important to keep in mind, because being a foreign researcher in an unfamiliar culture I needed to be mindful of the impression I was giving to my subjects in order to produce a more open relationship.

In addition to the four focal points of the open-ended question there are two functions of the open-ended question: subjects say what they are thinking, and subjects reveal how they interact (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 461). With a prepared

questionnaire or survey the subjects may not always get to provide the answer that they feel truly responds to the question (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 461). This is a main strength of the open-ended question. A subject can now answer a prepared question without the concern of choices or concern to answer the specific question at hand. In my research interviews I had many subjects answer a related question to the one I asked because they felt it to be relevant information. Due to the openness of the method I gained valuable insights into my subjects and my topic. The function, subjects reveal how they interact, is defined by Chesebro and Borisoff (2008) this way:

An effective use of the open-ended question should allow subjects to interact in any way they wish to when answering a question. They should use their own way or method for answering the question. Therefore, the researcher can focus not only on what is said, but how it is said. (p. 461)

This function allowed me as the researcher to use non-verbal communication in association with the verbal data I was gathering. This was especially helpful when I would use a translator for the interview. Where verbal language can get lost in translation, non-verbal language can be universal. By watching the subject deliver every answer, I was able to capture the interaction strategies (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 461). This strength of the open-ended question allows a communication researcher to gather more data in an answer than would be available in a quantitative method. This function also benefits human communication research in a foreign culture where language differences could alter the data.

My first open-ended interview was also my more interesting one. I was able to interview a Haitian filmmaker and production company owner, Reginald Chevalier. His

perspective was not only unique, but also informed. Reginald was in a good stable family where he had the opportunity of education and education in the United States for his college experience. He chose to return to Haiti to start a business and make a difference. He is making short dramatic documentaries as well as working professionally in the media field with his production company. He feels there is great opportunity in Haiti for media education. Reginald explained how there is a hunger for learning in Haiti, and more importantly how education can be the key out of poverty for many children. Reginald also had many insights into the state of media in Haiti right now and what it would be like with more professionals in Haiti producing Haitian content. This filmmaker's interview not only provided valuable data on media in Haiti, but also because of his time spent in the United States he was able to merge the two cultures and explain them. By working and going to school in the US Reginald knew how Americans view media and education, but he also had the Haitian perspective. This connection was invaluable to understanding the cultural contexts I needed to understand as I went forward. There was great benefit to my research to have this be my first interview.

Over the course of the ten days in Haiti I performed over fourteen different in depth open-ended question interviews. Most of which lasted at least half an hour, a few lasted over an hour. These all were detailed accounts from either NGOs living in Haiti or from Haitians with perspective on media and or education.

Triangulation

It would be irresponsible as a researcher to take the data gathered in each of these methods at face value, or to separate them on their own. Triangulation, or multiple class measurements, brings the data from all of these methods together to put them all into

perspective. More over, Chesebro & Borisoff (2008) define triangulation as a , “...means that a researcher will attempt to combine different research findings into one coherent explanation of human communication.” (p. 475). Triangulation means a researcher will create new “descriptions, interpretations, explanations, and even predictions about human communication” from his or her findings rather than just interpret the data in its one context (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 477). Human communication is too complex to depend on one method of research for comprehensive evaluation.

Triangulation allowed me to take the results from my open-ended question interviews and combine that with many of my simple observations. I would hear in my interviews how radio was an important media in Haiti. In the mountains of Haiti where I observed some of the poorest of the poor I would hear a radio blaring out of their huts. Most of those individual’s only connection to the rest of their culture and the world at large was a small battery powered radio. In my focus groups I heard how Haitians have a keen ability to survive and if that means learning something they will do it and fast. I observed this while acting as an instructor in a participant observation of students. They quickly caught on to what we were teaching and in little time seemed to retain the knowledge. It was vital for me to also use triangulation to explain cultural complexities and differences in context to media and education in Haiti. I had to use the data I was gathering about their culture and relate that back to the data I was getting about the impact and state of media in Haiti. The culture and media education conditions in Haiti are so different from the United States that typical definitions do not apply. It is important for Triangulation to provide a method of which I as the researcher can combine my methods to achieve a higher understanding of the role of media in the Haitian context.

Verification

Verification of data from qualitative research happens through the combination of all methods. These methods help to verify each other. Common discoveries in human communication in a participant observation can verify similar discoveries in simple observation and open-ended question interviews. However, we still need some criteria to judge this data by and to put it in an organized data set. Bruyn (1966) in his book *The Human Perspective in Sociology* accomplished this level of organization through three categories of data and then six dimensions where the context within which meaning arise (p. 262). This is shown in Table 1:

Table 1
Experimental Categories of Verification: Focus on Data

Categories of Data	Dimensions of Data					
	Time	Place	Circumstance	Language	Intimacy	Consensus
<i>Cognition</i> (How is the meaning made intelligible)	How long has the meaning been intelligible?	Is it cognitively associated with the environs? How?	Is it associated with social roles and groups? How?	How is the meaning communicated?	Is it expressed in private? How is it conveyed intelligibly?	How is it confirmed?
<i>Cathexis</i> (What quality of feeling is associated with the meaning?)	How long has sentiment been associated and does time change it?	Is the sentiment associated with environs? How?	Is it felt differently in different roles and events?	How is the sentiment communicated?	How is it experienced privately?	How is the sentiment confirmed?
<i>Conduct</i> (What kind of social action accompanies the meaning? How many people are involved?)	How long have how many people participated?	In what places do how many people act accordingly?	How do people act in different groups?	How is it conveyed in action? (In sound or ritual?)	How do people behave behind the scenes?	How do people show agreement in action?

Participant observation verification

Participant observation is not without its limitations, and the following three limitations are noteworthy to point out. Due to the fact that verification of participant

observed data would be more difficult than empirically gathered data, it was regarded as an incomplete and less rigorous approach (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 465). Thus it was assumed that data from a participant observation could not produce enduring, representative, and significant statements in terms of motives and values (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 466). The perception that participant observation can only be an approach capable of producing exploratory studies still continues to exist with some researchers today (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 466). This points only to how the method has been used in past research and does not reflect how the method has evolved into a competent strategy.

In examining data from a participant observation there are many differences between the laboratory experimentalist's and the participant observer's observational concerns (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, pp. 468-469). Chesebro and Borisoff (2008) break down the contrast between what participant observers are concerned about and what laboratory experimentalists are concerned about to highlight the nature of participant observation in Table 2 (p. 469).

Table 2
*Observational Concerns of the Participant Observer
 and the Laboratory Experimentalist*

Observational Concerns of the Participant Observer	Observational Concerns of the Laboratory Experimentalist
1. Investigate particular phenomena without definitive preconceptions of their nature.	1. Investigate particular phenomena with definitive preconceptions of their nature.
2. Observe in phenomena that which appears immediately to consciousness.	2. Observe in phenomena that which immediately appears to the senses.
3. Look for similarities in phenomena as given to consciousness; distinguish their essences and essential relations intuitively.	3. Look for similarities and differences between what is observed and what is operationally defined; distinguish their correlations statistically.
4. Explore how the phenomena constitute themselves in consciousness while continuing to suspend prior conceptions of their nature.	4. Explore how the phenomena constitute themselves in reason relative to social typologies.
5. Examine what concealed meanings may be discovered through the application of ontological conceptions [or socially created understandings] of reality.	5. Examine what concealed meanings may be discovered through the application of theoretical conceptions of social action.

These concerns of the participant observer were integral to my research in Haiti. I used these concerns in order to determine the meaningfulness of the data I gathered. This was accomplished using Bruyn's, "Experimental Categories of Verification." (Bruyn, 1966, p. 261). Table 3 is the criteria that can be used to judge data originating from a participant observation study (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 469).

Table 3
*Criteria for Judging the Data of the
 Participant Observer and Laboratory Experimentalist*

Criteria for Judging the Data of the Participant Observer	Criteria for Judging the Data of the Laboratory Experimentalist
1. TIME: How long has the observer participated in the setting?	1. Does the observer relate his or her interpretations to empirical fact and structural theory?
2. PLACE: Where has the observer participated in the physical setting?	2. Does the observer relate his or her study to other culturally associated contexts?
3. CIRCUMSTANCES: In what social groups and social roles has he or she participated?	3. Does the observer manifest a lack of definition in his or her reporting and sufficient distance from his or her subjects?
4. LANGUAGE: How well does the observer know the language?	4. Does the observer manifest illustrativeness and an objective style in his or her description?
5. INTIMACY: In what private social arrangements does the observer participate?	
6. CONSENSUS: How does the observer confirm what meanings he or she finds existing in the culture?	

By using this criteria I was able to have guidelines in place for the data that I extracted. It allowed my journaled data to be formulated into categories of organization. I used “TIME” to judge both the time I studied my subjects in Haiti as well as what role I played in the particular research situation based on my time in that particular community (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 470). “PLACE” was particularly important to my research to judge the data of physical location of my subjects (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 470). It was crucial for me to consider my subject’s relationship to their environment. The comparison of subjects interacting with mass media in a small remote mountain Haitian village versus a large Haitian urban slum played a large role in my research. “SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCE” deals with observing a subject in contrasting

social environment, and was a difficult criteria to obtain in the Haitian culture. In order to achieve contrast from my subjects I needed to observe them in their natural working/school environment as well as their home environment. Haitians know they are poor and are not proud of this fact. Therefore it was difficult to observe them in their home environment. I was, however, able to observe different subjects in the same local area in their homes. The subject might have changed, but I was able to see the way a typical Haitian in that region of the country lived in that social class level. “LANGUAGE” also had a large emphasis in my journaling. The Creole language carries with it cultural significance. It was vital to my research to study the effects of the local language on the impact mass media has on the Haitian culture. One hundred percent of Haitians speak Creole and for ninety percent of them Creole is their only language (Valdman, 2000, p. 36). This means that most media content created outside of Haiti cannot be used. Therefore almost all of the media content in Haiti is created by Haitians for Haitians, thus making language a pivotal part of my research data taken through participant observation. The criteria of “INTIMACY” was used to judge the data I would collect comparing public and private social openings (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 470). This was important to take into consideration when there were areas of my subjects’ communication that I could not go beyond due to a social barrier. I recorded these social barriers and where they were present. “CONSENSUS” was used to clarify meaning in social situations in the context of the culture (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 471). I needed to employ this tactic often in my research observation because of my foreign nature to the Haitian culture. I needed to be aware of the constant cultural differences and record them. However, to record them properly I needed to verify the data’s meanings

with the subjects I was observing. Only through this consensus being recorded by, “documenting the circumstances under which meaning were confirmed, indicating the number of people who confirmed them, describing the way in which they were confirmed, and record the period of time in which the observations were made” (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 471), was I able to judge the data effectively.

Open-ended question verification

Advantages to the open-ended question method have been addressed. It is good to point out its disadvantages too. One of the more obvious disadvantages is the high drop rate in an open-ended question method. This refers to what Chesebro and Borisoff (2008) describe as “wasted information” or “excessive information” (p. 461). Remaining respectful to a subject it is not in the researchers best interest to interrupt answers. This is especially true in regards to the fourth focal point: “Subjects Feel They Can Qualify Their Answers as They Wish” (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2008, p. 461). Remaining respectful can lead to wasted time and wasted information in the open-ended question method. I did not have too much experience in a high drop rate during my interviews. However, there were a few subjects that I knew the answers I was getting did not lead to any discovery towards my thesis question. In these situations as a non-biased researcher I remained patient and waited for an opportunity to ask another question related to the research area of study.

Conclusion

This research uses a qualitative research method to accomplish the function of answering the aforementioned research questions. By utilizing well-documented methods

of qualitative research, it is possible to perform this qualitative research. Open-ended questions were used to interview subjects of research interest in Haiti during my time of field research. These interviews provided information on the state of the Haitian education system that currently exists. The data from the open-ended questions to local Haitians also provided cultural relevance to the symbols associated with communication and media. This cultural relevance data helped put into perspective the contrasts of education in the varying regions of my research. The interviews also yielded data in how media is used in Haiti. This is especially useful in determining the importance and impact media has on this culture. Gaining local media users as well as media professionals' interviews provided a data set representing the process of mass media communication in the Haitian culture. Conversely it was important for me to know if Haitians were interested in learning technology, specifically media technology. This data could only be obtained through interviews in this qualitative method.

Participant observation allowed me to record the culture in its natural environment. By documenting through journaling, videotaping, and photos, I was able to evaluate the culture's values, structure, and functions. As an outsider I needed to gain a frame of reference of the culture I was researching. The participant observation method gave me a technique to achieve this level of reference on my subjects. To answer my research question it is imperative that I understand the Haitian subjects' natural environment as a criteria to evaluate my data by. Combining these methods granted me a way to answer the thesis question.

Chapter IV: Findings

As the previous chapters have illustrated, Haiti is a unique environment, not just as a third world nation but also in culture and heritage. There has been a fascination with this country as a forbidden land. This could be contributed to the voodoo culture or the remoteness that makes up most of Haiti's geography. The end result of this attitude of a forbidden nation is seen on the faces of every Haitian. In some ways it is the land that has been forgotten by the developed world. Economic and political instability has left this country without some of the basic needs and opportunities that we in the western world take for granted. Solutions to Haiti's problems will only be realized through the understanding of Haiti's problems. My research's first goal was to understand the problem of education in Haiti, and then attempt to understand how media and technology can play a role in reform.

Employing the specific ethnographic methods outlined in Chapter 3, my experiences as an observer, interviewer, and participant observer coalesced, and I began to experience and articulate certain understandings as more formal conclusions that accounted for the ongoing processes in which I participated. Five conclusions warrant attention here. However, it should be noted that these are not the kind of traditional conclusions that a survey researcher might provide. The conclusions are not based on statistical inferences, but rather represent a merger (e.g., triangulation) of the observations I made (e.g., simple observations), what I came to experience in diverse roles within the Haitian culture (e.g., participant observation) and, the questions I asked to understand both the perspective and specific understandings of those within the Haitian

culture (e.g., open-ended questions and focus groups). Within this context, this chapter outlines five experienced-based observations, what lead to these conclusions, what was understood as well as how these conclusions were obtained.

Conclusion 1: Students in Haiti are eager to learn and adapt quickly to technology.

Many might argue that an underdeveloped nation, such as Haiti, would have trouble adapting to technology because of the lack of such technology in the country. It is true that Haiti is very poor and that very little technology can exist in a place where electricity is at best undependable. However, one of my more surprising observations was how quickly students could grasp the basics of a technology after seeing it for the first time. Along with this quick grasp of technology was an eagerness to use technology.

As a participant observer at the Tele Lumiere media training school, I performed the role of an instructor as well as a passive observer. In these roles I saw first hand their hunger for knowledge. I was asked questions faster then I could answer them all. My frame of reference as an instructor comes from the fact that I also teach college courses where I work. My students in the US are never as interested on any given day as these Haitian students were. Their willingness to listen and be instructed amazed me. One such student by the name of Salomon Ricot was continually asking me about not only the media technology but also about what my job was in the United States. He impressed me by his eagerness to learn and desire to better himself and his situation.

The Haitian students I instructed were also eager to get their hands on computers and equipment to explore and experiment. While they may have lacked awareness and some basic computer skills they had the ability and capacity to learn fast. It was only one day, but what they were able to accomplish in that one day was impressive to me as an

observer. In terms of some simple observations also done during this time I was able to see how much ingenuity these students use on a regular basis. Their situation and condition have made them more resilient to their lack of infrastructure and training. For example, they have been able to produce weekly television shows in a makeshift studio with very humble equipment.

All of these experiences also suggest that Haitians – and potentially all children in underdeveloped cultures – could survive in a digital world. This skill of survival is ever apparent in all areas of the Haitian culture. I observed this same skill over and over in all parts of Haiti. The ability to survive is a common trait among Haitians. This fact was expressed many times by Tele Lumiere’s chief engineer and instructor during an interview using open-ended questions. His opinion was that Haitians wanted to and needed an education. As he said, “the desire is there, sometimes the opportunities are not.”

I also had the opportunity to interview a few of the students, and I asked them open-ended questions about education and technology. When I asked the students if there were others like them interested in working in media I got the same response over and over. They would tell me about the abundance of students there could be, but they just lacked the resources of proper training. This answers goes back to references in my chapter two about the technology itself cannot succeed without proper instruction. I also asked if it mattered if it was Haitians teaching them or foreigners? Here again the answers I got were the same. They all expressed a willingness to learn no matter how it was offered. The important factor to them was not the race of the teacher, but rather the knowledge and willingness of the instructor to share.

By using the method of triangulation, I was also able to connect many of the simple observations I had with the open-ended questions and participant observation observations. For example, while I was visiting another media training school in the northern Haitian town of Cap Haitien I was able to compare the data gathered from the media school in Port Au Prince to the one the Cap Haitian. This school was part of a radio station called 4VEH. They taught young Haitians to work in radio and how to record music in their recording studios. Cap Haitian is very different then the southern towns of Haiti. The culture is different and the economy is even more depressed then in Port Au Prince. However, I found the same eagerness to learn technology and aptitude for learning. Most of the professionals or students that I interviewed were very willing to show me what they knew about their craft. One student spent a lot of time with us to show us how he had sound mixed a live studio recording. He and others I interviewed in Cap Haitian had similar responses to the questions I had asked the students at Tele Lumiere. They all expressed: a need for more media in Haiti, a need for more technical and media training in schools, an interest and hunger to learn, and a desire to keep up with the technological advances of the west. I also asked this student how long he had been working with media and technology to be as proficient as he was? He told me he had only been doing it for a few years. This is very impressive considering the lack of professionals in Haiti. He also told me how Haitians are trying to adapt to technology, but without any direction. He explained how many Haitians are making movies and mixing audio on the street corners. However, they do not have the right equipment or know-how to achieve any level of quality. There is a void of talent and a void of professionals to teach. He was fortunate to have the opportunity at 4VEH, because, “many Haitians want

to learn they just do not have an outlet to learn.” I saw in the individuals I interviewed at 4VEH a desire to be trained outside of Haiti, because they felt they could not get a quality education in Haiti. This represents a need that I observed in every region I traveled in. Even our young Haitian driver in Cap Haitien wanted to learn media and technology but felt he would only get a quality education outside of Haiti.

I often asked questions regarding change in Haiti like what can be done in Haiti to promote positive change? I would consistently, in open-ended question interviews and in simple observation, get the same answer: education. The importance of education is not lost on the people of Haiti. They know they are poor; they know they need education, and they will use any means to acquire it.

Conclusion 2: Media have profound effects on Haitian society.

Because of the low literacy rate in Haiti, media – such as radio and television – have become the major sources of news and connection for the Haitian people (Dash, 2001, p. 86). The geographical features of Haiti also exemplify this reliance on media. The mountainous terrain makes traditional means of communication difficult (Dash, 2001, p. 87). However, by using transmitters high in the mountains radio and television stations are able to cover the entire country relatively effectively.

Radio

During each of the last four coup attempts the military has attacked and shut down radio stations showing the unique importance radio has on this culture (Dash, 2001, p. 88). Radio has long been the voice of Haitians, however, during the more turbulent times of political unrest Haitian journalists were attacked, jailed, and sometimes killed, as in the case of Haiti’s most popular journalist leader Jean Dominique (Dash, 2001, p. 86). This

left a void of professional journalists in Haiti and a lack of interest in the profession because of government intimidation (Triest, 1993, p. 154). Radio, and to a limited extent television, has been a driving force for Haitian freedom. For most in Haiti radio is their only way to speak out because they lack the ability to read or write. Radio stations like Radio Lumiere and 4VEH are well respected and trusted because their programming is in the language of the people, Creole (Dash, 2001, p. 87). Unlike televisions radios are portable and battery powered, making them easy to obtain and carry around. This was easy to observe when I was in a variety of locations throughout Haiti.

While riding a horse on the side of a mountain more than three thousand feet up I met a young boy who had a radio around his neck. We were in one of the more remote areas of the country and yet here was a child without shoes or a jacket listening to a radio. On that same day in the mountains we would commonly hear a radio inside a hillside hut or shanty house. On the first day in Haiti we were driving and walking through Cite Soleil, which is considered one of the poorest places on the earth. Most of the homes were one room shacks with nothing but dirt floors and maybe a cot. However, what most of them also had was a radio or television. I was amazed by this, but it became more apparent to me that media was of great importance to this society, even the least of the least. While driving through most urban areas of Haiti you will encounter a blaring radio on every street corner. In the last few years the number of radio stations has grown exponentially (Dash, 2001, p. 88). A recent online site called *Radio Station World* yielded seventy different radio stations in Haiti as of January of 2009. For a country the size of the state of New Hampshire this is a lot of radio stations, especially when you consider the economical and political climate. In our interview with the Radio Lumiere's

station director he told us how media, radio and television, was widespread among the different providences in Haiti and that media is not just a city phenomenon. He talked about how the problem is not the availability of media in Haiti, just the availability of trained media professionals. His opinion was there are good communicators and storytellers in Haiti; they just lack the education and equipment to go about communicating in this technological world. Therefore, what you end up with is storytellers and communicators from outside of Haiti speaking for Haiti. He, as well as many others at both radio stations I talked to, was concerned about the amount of negative stories being produced on Haiti. The open-ended question interview I had with the Assistant Radio and Television Director at Radio Lumiere told me that it is vital for more Haitians to be involved in radio and television because of the influence it has. He said that in Haiti what is said on the radio or on the television is ‘believed as truth’. Because radio is the primary source of information for most Haitians there is little else Haitians have to verify any news they get from the radio. I observed this responsibility is not taken lightly in either of the two stations I visited.

Television

Television in Haiti has only been available to the masses since the late 1970’s (Dash, 2001, p. 87). Television has not spread or had the influence like radio due to a lack of electricity in Haiti (Dash, 2001, p. 88). However, this does not mean that television does not play an influential role on the society of Haiti. In the first fifteen years of television in Haiti most of the stations were controlled by the government and used as propaganda tools (Dash, 2001, p. 88). In the 1980’s it was also too expensive for most to get channels because most of the stations were on cable and not broadcast over the air

(Dash, 2001, p. 88). However, despite the lack of certain infrastructures television has had a renaissance in the last five to ten years in Haiti. Seeing radios and televisions in the poverty of Cite Soleil is even more astounding when you consider how they obtained electricity. Over alleys and streets is a thrown together network of electrical wiring, the source of which is stolen off of city electrical polls. From house to house, shack to shack these wires criss cross above the streets for what I observed as one common purpose: radios and televisions. What little electricity these people could get they used for consumption of media. This is the best example I observed of the impact television had on Haitian society.

The second most powerful example occurred while traveling with a local television show host/producer. His show is broadcast weekly all over Haiti. While in Cite Soleil children and adults would come up to us because they recognized Joel from television. These were some of the poorest of the poor, but that did not limit the impact of television on their lives. In simple observation all across Haiti I would witness large gatherings on street corners, of all types of people, mostly in the late afternoon and early evening. They would stand around watching a common device. After seeing a few of these gatherings I was finally able to see what it was they were looking at. It was a television. Almost every neighborhood had a television where people would go to after a day of work or school to watch sports, news, or an entertainment show of some kind. I confirmed this activity with some open-ended question interviews I had with local Haitians as well as professionals in media in Haiti. They would tell me that everyone in Haiti knows where to go to watch a television. Very few Haitians own one themselves, but there are enough “community televisions” to reach a majority of the population. I also

learned that many smaller communities in Haiti have developed “home made” closed circuit cable systems. For example, in Cap Haitien there is an unorganized network of cable television all over the town. This has resulted in an unknown number of television stations in Cap Haitien only broadcasting on this small cable television system. Most of these television stations put movies on, usually illegal and not licensed. No one is really policing these operations in Haiti do to their small size. Television is also having an impact outside of Haiti. As more in country content is produced, this content is filtering out to the Caribbean and to Haitian cable stations in the United States.

Conclusion 3: A need for media professionals and professional media educators exists in Haiti.

The professionals I talked to in Haiti all agree that Haiti has many problems but there are good things happening that are not getting deserving coverage. This is why in all of my interviews Haitians expressed a need for more Haitians in influential media roles all over the country. Reginald Chevalier, a local filmmaker I talked to told me that the image of Haiti to westerners is not an accurate one. He went on to explain how the world sees Haiti the way it is not through the eyes of Haitians but through the eyes of western reporters. He was upset by how reporters will fly in for a few days and visit the worst areas of Haiti, send these images back and forever portray Haiti in a negative view. In his opinion it was not only important to show the suffering but to also show the hope that exists. The people of Haiti are poor, yes, but they are also a joyful and beautiful culture. Reginald was not just speaking about the influence of media on Haitians but also the influence of media on the rest of the world. This is a byproduct of the lack of

qualified professionals in media communicating the needs, hopes, and culture of the true Haiti.

When I interviewed Pritchard Adams, headmaster of two primary schools in Cap Haitian, he talked extensively about a brain drain in Haiti. Not just a brain drain but also a drain of professionals. He shared when Haitians have the education or skills to become professionals in any area the trend is they leave the country for training, because that training does not exist in Haiti. Subsequently most of these Haitians do not come back to live in Haiti again. This phenomenon was also presented to me in my open-ended question interviews with professionals at Radio Lumiere and 4VEH, as well as with other Haitians I spoke to. 'Where there is an education void there will be a professional void as well' is how Pritchard explained it. Pritchard also spoke on the desire of Haitian professionals to stay in Haiti. In his experience most of the professionals he knows that moved away wanted to stay, but for economic reasons could not make a living being a professional in Haiti. He said there needs to be tools to create an environment where professionals can make a living in their profession. Mr. Adams had another quote in regards to this issue of professionals leaving Haiti. He said, "A success without a successor is a failure." Meaning, if professionals that come to Haiti to train Haitians or to provide a humanitarian need do not train up a leader to succeed them the project will ultimately fail. He has seen this problem in action all over Haiti. Foreign aid workers come in to perform a task or project but do not properly train Haitians to take over when they are gone.

In other simple observations of the quality and effectiveness of the Haitian media, I could see a real need for professional expertise. I have worked as a professional in

television and radio for seven years. What I observed in Haiti as a participant observer and in simple observation was a lack of technical ability. The students I instructed had the conceptual ideas, but not the technical know how to produce their ideas into quality media products. This lack of quality as a consequence of limited professional experience and instruction came up in many of my open-ended question interviews. In my experience, communicating through media is a craft that needs to be honed. Honing is hard to do in an environment without professional development. Haiti and other developing countries suffer from this same affliction of brain drain. The situation is a self-fulfilling prophecy. As professionals leave Haiti for a better life, the lives of Haitians suffer.

Conclusion 4: Haitian schools would benefit from more technology.

Conclusion number four is not an easy task to accomplish despite a definitive need. Pritchard Adams had some very strong opinions on the education system of Haiti as an educator himself. He sees technology as a great benefit to what his schools are doing. However, he pointed out that a major overhaul of the Haitian education system was well overdue. According to Adams the methods and techniques in Haiti are “archaic and outdated”, and an overhaul would have to happen before technology could be implemented in their educational culture. He went on to say that despite these issues if you were able to expose children to technology early enough and had quality teaching there could be limitless possibilities for those students. Given the same opportunity as American children Adams felt Haitians would be just as adept at learning technology through technology. In the short time I had in Adam’s school it was easy to see how they are in need of resources regardless if they are technology based or not. The classrooms I

visited were basic at best with limited modern conveniences, which is what you would expect. His school was not one of the best in Haiti but it was far from the worst of what I saw in Haiti. Just from a library point of view if this school had a set of computers to access books from online that would fill a need well beyond the basics of computer skills. In Adams' experience he has seen Haitians grasp technology very quickly, even if never before being exposed to it. When I spoke with Reginald Chevalier he told me that he would not have become a media professional without the education he had in the United States. He told me how the Haitian education system does not have proper or adequate curriculum in media or technology. To be a media professional he had to achieve education outside of Haiti. Fortunately for Haiti Chevalier returned to help tell the Haitian stories, while at the same time becoming a working professional with his own production business. According to most people I spoke with this is the exception to the rule. Chevalier also mentioned how receptive Haitians are to new technologies and that a school integrating technology would not have problems with the culture of the society.

During my participant observation role at Radio and TV Lumiere, I witnessed how beneficial it would have been for these students to have technology in their previous educational experiences. In some ways they were held back by a lack of computer skills and knowledge. Simple skills that current students in first world nations possess, have to be taught to Haitians at a much later stage in their education. In my simple observation the students I observed were very intelligent and quick to learn. I could also see in them a real desire to know as much about the computer technologies as they could. The Haitian people are proud however; they respect education and see education as an answer to their situations. Pritchard Adams told me that twenty years ago, when they came to the island,

Haiti was over seventy five percent illiterate. Now the country is almost fifty percent literate. This represents an increased value in education. For the most part economical and political conditions have not improved in the last twenty years, so that begs the question why has education increased?

There are also economical observations to present as an argument for the need of technology in the classroom. The world has become ever more connected due to technology. In this regard technology is passing Haiti by. The availability of technology, computers, and Internet access is limited in Haiti. There have been efforts by select companies to bring satellite Internet to different regions of the country. I was able to spend time with one of these companies, Haiti Satellite. They have been able to provide a relative low cost Internet solution to the island. In a country that lacks a telephone line infrastructure, a satellite connection is the best solution available. Right now it is only affordable for businesses, the elite, and NGOs. However, Haiti Satellite has brought the Internet to remote regions of the country where communication was difficult at best with the outside world. Joel Trimble, owner of Haiti Satellite, says this has huge potential for the education system of the country. With little relative investment a school could have an Internet connection. This is only a piece of the puzzle, yet it is a large part of a deficient infrastructure of education. The price of satellite internet is comparable to what Americans pay for internet access. Even though this is still not a reality for individual Haitians it does mean that business, schools, and churches could impact their communities with a new influx of affordable technology and internet access.

Education, as I observed, does not just happen in traditional schools. Education in Haiti is also informal. Part of this informal education is through media and technology.

As a child listens to the radio, watches the television, or uses a computer they are being educated. The quality of that education is up for debate. However, it is hard to dispute that education is not happening on a very basic level through some of the limited sources of technology that I saw in Haiti. Students not only need a formal education but an informal one as well. Their informal education helps to shape their worldview. In my conversations with education professionals in Haiti, they expressed to me an almost critical situation were Haiti needs a technically skilled workforce to attract companies. No matter how cheap the workforce is, if they do not possess the very basics of computer knowledge and literacy that workforce is not practical for a corporation anymore. This sentiment was echoed over and over in my discussions both formal and informal. Haiti is at risk of being isolated from the rest of the world due to a lack of modern education and this includes technology in education.

Conclusion 5: Technology education can combat Haiti's isolationism and potentially affect its economic and cultural identity.

In conclusion four I touched on the issue of isolationism in terms of technology advances in the world surpassing the capacity of the Haitian workforce. Technology and computers are a key element towards a solution to this one problem. Communication is a basic human need. This need can be facilitated over long distances by telephones, mobile phones, pagers, and computers. A Pew Internet study survey of over seven hundred technology stakeholders and critics showed that 77% of them agreed that a mobile communication device will be the primary communication tool to the Internet by 2020 (Anderson & Rainie, 2008, p. 25). This fact is significant to Haiti because of the mass proliferation of mobile phones in the country. Due to a massive lack of infrastructure and

a rugged terrain physical phone lines are typically only in the larger cities and are not well maintained according to the locals. According to the Inter-American Development Bank in 2004 only 16 in every 1000 have a telephone line in Haiti, compared to nearly 700 in every 1000 in the United States (Global Link Database, 2009). Therefore mobile companies such as Digicell have found commercial success in a hard economic climate like Haiti because of that need for communication. The number of the Haitian Diaspora² in other countries also heavily influences the need for communication in Haiti. Many Haitians leave Haiti if they have the chance or opportunity. Thus they leave family members behind, and the only way to communicate with loved ones is through these cell phones. Cell phones in Haiti are semi-affordable due to their pre-pay system of payment. There are no cell phone plans in Haiti, in comparison to the popular contract plans in the United States. In Haiti you pay for the amount of minutes you can afford. I observed cell phone vendors on almost every city street corner as well as in most of the villages I visited. A vast majority of Haitians I saw had cell phones. Even some of the poorest I met had at least a very basic cell phone for communication. They lacked necessities like indoor plumbing, however, they had basic communication to the outside world. This cheap form of mobile communication could be another gateway to the Internet and the world in the future if the predictions of the Pew study hold true.

Even now there is limited data access to the Internet on the cell network in Haiti. Given the right kind of cell phone there is limited instant access to the Internet almost anywhere in the country. Due to the rugged mountainous terrain cell phone towers can be placed in high locations giving them greater range in Haiti. I experienced this when we visited one of the highest and remote spots in Haiti. I had great cell reception with my

phone and I was even able to send a text message and check my email. Wireless mobile data can be the future for Haiti connecting globally to a growing tech-savvy world. With the mass availability and penetration of cell phones in Haiti, combined with a growing cellular data network, the potential to connect Haitians to the Internet seems more feasible than ever before.

Just as global communication has changed our culture in America it has done so in Haiti. The ability to communicate freely with cell phones has changed the freedom of speech for the culture. The island of Haiti is more connected now than it ever was before. As tough as the poverty makes life in Haiti there is still a great sense of pride in every Haitian I met. They were proud to be Haitian, and they did not consider themselves poor. A few informal interviews I had on the street revealed this strong sense of pride. In these interactions it was clear by their body language and their confidence that they were surviving and that meant something. This survival mentality of the culture feeds into their work and their life. When I asked if Haitians could adapt to technology, I overwhelmingly got the answer yes. The reason why everyone gave me this answer was due to the survival nature of their culture. One of the radio engineers at Radio 4VEH told me, "If technology helped them to survive and thrive they would learn it and learn it quickly."

Education of technology and its uses is not only important for the youth of Haiti but also for the entire viable workforce. From my simple observations, focus group questions, and open-ended questions it was clear to me that Haiti is not the uncivilized world that is depicted to the rest of the world. Haitians want to learn and want to be a part

of the global economy and society. They are not isolated by choice. They are isolated because of a government that has failed in providing the basics to the Haitians.

Benefits to the Haitian education system could happen through government policies towards technology and media in the education system. Right now, as explained by Pritchard Adams, there is a lack of policies to promote change in the national education system. There is no central educational governmental office that regulates the schools in Haiti. Some would argue against the need for this due to the corrupt nature of the government. However, there also lacks any mechanism for distributing resources for the schools. Policy orientated government change in the education system could bring resources in from the outside. The government does not need to have the funds for resourcing the schools. They need influential policies that non-for-profit foundations would give to. Through more organization and efficiency the national education system could benefit from a number of available grants and aid dollars. This would require a significant political policy shift according to the educators I talked to in Haiti.

The other benefit to this conclusion is the dissemination of Haitian culture to the world through technology. There are more Haitians living outside of Haiti than there are Haitians in Haiti today (Dash, 2001, pp. 42-48). Haitians have fled their own country to find better opportunity in neighboring islands as well as the United States and France. These Haitians remain in close contact to their homeland through communication. One reason for this is the belief in the Diaspora society that they will one day return to Haiti when the situation improves (Dash, 2001, p. 46). This has created an export of the Haitian culture to other countries through the people, but also through their continued connection to Haiti. Many of the students I met told me they wanted to either live or go to

school in the United States. Some of them were working on their English because it was their dream to live in the United States. To most of these students it was not because they wanted to leave Haiti, as much as it was because they wanted to have a career or achieve a greater status in life than their friends or family have. For some working in the United States provides a way to support their family in Haiti. Technology is helping this export of the culture to take place. Whether this is a good or bad phenomenon is not the focus of this study. However, computers, cell phones, and the Internet have facilitated education in some areas of Haiti giving some the opportunity to leave Haiti in search for better opportunities.

A 2001 Pew/Internet research study examined a few of the urban development Internet and technology projects in the United States. The study showed that through economic development and community development policies regarding uses of technology and the Internet have increased the entrepreneurship and economic climate of these urban areas in a few short years (Horrigan, 2001, p. 4). This study unfortunately is not applied to any third world nation, however, it does show that in the right conditions technology has the ability to promote change and in a short amount of time. In my observation Haiti does not have all of these conditions in place, but they are also not starting at square one. Joel Trimble of Haiti Satellite informed me that Haiti has a robust cellular network, a growing Internet capacity through satellite and wireless connections, and a desire to be connected in the same way the rest of the world is connected. The government has a long way to go in improving the conditions for its people. However, action through policy reform is one way the government can promote change. Organizations like the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) want to come along side

governments to help them make positive changes to their educational systems. These organizations know that through education and technology the cultural and political problems are given a chance to change for the better (Talbot, 2008, p. 64). It takes a government that is willing to promote these changes and policies to work with organizations like OLPC.

Conclusion

My time of study in Haiti was both eye opening as well as educating. I met some of the most interesting and strong individuals in my interviews and participant observations. I was both encouraged and troubled by the sights I saw. True perspective on this study and these five conclusions would not have happened if it was not for my immersive interaction with the culture. There is both great need and great potential in Haiti for technology. In this chapter we have learned that Haitians are eager to learn and adapt quickly to technology, media have effects on Haiti, a need for media professions exists in Haiti, Haitian schools would benefit from more technology, and technology education can benefit Haiti's isolationism and affect its economic and cultural identity. Again I would like to express this is just one of many solutions to Haiti's problems, and not everyone in Haiti would benefit from technology. However, I do believe the greater good would be served through policy and social change with technology and increased global connection through the Internet.

Chapter V: Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Study

This chapter provides major conclusions of the previous four chapters. This chapter also identifies some of the limitations of this research as well as recommendations for further research on this subject of study.

Major Conclusions

Chapter one laid out important and crucial background into the cultural, socio-economic, and political environments of Haiti. This background has important significance to the two-fold problem explored in this study. The first problem is a lack of technology and media in the education system of Haiti, and the second problem is the cultural context of this study in the Haitian culture. Specifically chapter one concluded that despite the infrastructure and poverty needs of Haiti, improvements in its educational system are critical, if not an essential way in which the infrastructure and poverty of Haiti are to be transformed. In this regard, all of the evidence I have seen suggests that technology education is not a luxury in an emerging economy, but an essential ingredient for education reform. The need for technology and media education in Haiti is also significant for the study of communication, especially in an underdeveloped and emerging nation. As our world becomes ever more connected by technology, the digital developed world is passing underdeveloped nations by. Neither technology nor knowledge is a privilege of the elite of the world. Education must be a right of all children in all nations of the world regardless of the socio-economic status of a nation-state. Indeed, if it is true that computer technologies can transform the educational system of underdeveloped countries – and as far as I know, all of the evidence suggests that –

then given the declining costs and increasing usability of computer technologies, there is ultimately no rationale for excluding the children of Haiti from the kind of educational experience that computer technologies can provide. For Haiti unconventional technology education could be a policy that improves the conditions of many youth and children in poverty today.

The literature review in chapter two, ultimately, leaves us with two major arguments. First, introducing media and computer technology enhances the educational and overall culture and economy of a nation state especially a developing one. Second, Haiti can benefit from the inclusion of computer and media technology in its educational system. Through the review of studies and articles referencing the enhancement of education in developing nations using computers and technology chapter 2 concludes that not only do computers and technology enhance education but also that Haiti is a fertile ground ready for technology's impact and influence.

The methods, presented in chapter three, drove my research while in Haiti. Using the qualitative methods of participant observation, simple observation, focus groups, open-ended question interviews, and triangulation allowed me to achieve a more verifiable data set. Qualitative research methods provided a means for me to achieve a level of verification in a unique environment like Haiti, as described in chapter one. All of the qualitative methods combined to provide a method of verification through triangulation. Such verification would not have been possible if a quantitative method had been employed. In an uneducated or illiterate society like Haiti a host of educational barriers exist that only qualitative research methods, not quantitative methods, are able to overcome efficiently.

Chapter four presented five major substantive conclusions based on the findings from the qualitative research methods. Specifically, this chapter concluded that: (1) Students in Haiti are eager to learn and adapt quickly to technology, based on my observations of student's interaction with computers and technology. (2) Technology can enhance education in the Haitian educational system if the student's situations and environments are not a deterrent to learning technology. (3) Technology in education is vital to a culture like Haiti where media have profound effects on the society. Haitians number one news and connection source to the world is radio and second is television. (4) A media influenced society like Haiti's needs more media and technically proficient professionals for positive change to happen within. (5) Through an educational policy of technology in education, Haiti can potentially affect its economic and cultural identity by eliminating Haiti's isolationism from the developed world.

Limitations of the study

No research or study is perfect or complete. This study is no different. Haitian culture and society is too complex to capture in just one investigation or to reflect in a volume such as this one. For example, this study lacks useful information that might have been obtained in a more extended analysis of this country. Or, potentially just as true, a more extended analysis might have provided a foundation for concluding that the kind of research that should have been undertaken about Haitian education has simply not yet been completed. Lack of data on the educational and technology situation in Haiti requires a researcher to gather more information in country versus other developed nations where quality data is abundant. Moreover, from my perspective, Haiti is actually two countries. One exists in remote villages and mountains; the other exists in urban

areas. Each suffers from specific and unique problems. I was able to visit both, however, not in an exhaustive manner. Many regions I could not get to, due to lack of time and or transportation. Given the effort in this study to capture what Bruyn has identified as the “human perspective” associated with participant observation, for example, a more extensive exploration of the entire nation might ultimately be important, if not essential, to the analysis undertaken in this study.

In this context, the time and length of study also affected the sample size of my study. By increasing the sample size of my simple observations and open-ended question interviews more verification could take place by comparing the data gathered as a whole. The roles of which I performed participant observation might also have been expanded to include other areas and other roles, although I ultimately believe there was a restricted number of roles I might have effectively adopted in this culture, suggesting that a more extensive use of confederates, if not an entire research team composed predominately of Haitian communication researchers, might ultimately have been appropriate. Given more time and resources I could have performed the role of teacher/instructor in a larger demographic cross section of the country. This study would have also benefited from a larger variety of participant observation roles. I primarily used the role of observer bystander or active instructor. Given my expertise in media I could have performed more roles at various media organizations in Haiti.

Another limitation of this study was the variety of sample groups observed. Despite visiting two radio/television stations, my verification of data would have been more complete with a wider variety of television and radio stations in the different regions of Haiti. This limitation is also present in the lack of variety of schools I was able

to visit and attend in Haiti. Given that most schools in Haiti are private, access to them was more difficult than I had anticipated. The information regarding Haitian educational systems would be more complete with additional qualitative research in both private and public secondary and primary schools. Due to most of the country's schools being private, the type and conditions of the Haitian schools are all over the map. The varied conditions and educational methods make it hard to judge their educational systems in general statements. This study attempted to present as accurate portrayal of the Haitian school system as possible. However, without a larger sample of schools researched, the accuracy of this portrayal is subject to some criticism.

The triangulation of the data in this study was also limited in some respects by the singularity of the method's researcher. Greater insights could be gleaned through a triangulation with an external panel of experts. However, from my perspective, I think I would still seek to preserve the inner perspective of the researcher for validation of the data due to the researchers intimate experience with the data.

Recommendations for future study

In addition to recommendations for future study on specific topics regarding technology in education in Haiti, I would also recommend the context of underdeveloped and emerging nations may require an alternative and expanded notion of how communication *theorizing* is conceived and defined. In this regard, Wood (1996) has proposed that the three traditional goals of communication theorizing – description, interpretation, and control/prediction – be supplemented by a fourth goal for theorizing, namely *reform*. Wood specifically defines theorizing reform in these terms. In Lawrence Frey and Kevin Carragee's (2007) book *Communicative Activism as Engaged*

Scholarship, define communication activism as using the communication knowledge researchers gain to manage social issues and to engage in active social change (p. 3). In other words, a communication activist approach holds that a responsibility of knowledge is acting on that knowledge. If through further research in Haiti a benefit to the education system is discovered that research information can then be used for social and policy reform. Julia Wood (1997) in her book *Communication Theories in Action* defines this research goal of reform as:

...active pursuit of positive social change. ...Many current scholars argue persuasively that theories should make a difference in the real world – that they should improve the lives of humans in concrete ways. In addition, many theorists today reject the idea that scholars should or should be a part of the world – not removed from it – and that their work is informed by who they are and the experiences they have had.

Future study on this subject in Haiti could be vital to educational and economical reform. In other words this kind of education reform undertaken in Haiti should intentionally and deliberately be designed so that the educational transformation might also have an immediate and direct impact on the social and cultural environment of the Haitian society. If an economical impact model could be constructed from research data on technology in education there would be rational for reform. Certainly, more data and test pilot programs are needed to determine a more reliable validity to this educational model. From my perspective, research without action in Haiti would only continue the cycle of poverty and hopelessness, and it would ultimately be – in my view – irresponsible to undertake a more extensive audit of the potential communication and educational effects

of computer technology in Haiti without simultaneously asking how such transformations might also be intentionally designed – if possible – to affect the socio-economic conditions of Haiti. Lack of intervention by the developed world in Haiti has helped to create the current conditions. As researchers we have a unique perspective into the problems that give us insights into solutions.

Conclusion

Haiti is both a beautiful and tragic case in human history. However, despite the despair I found hope in the future Haitian generation I also found that students of Haiti were hungry for knowledge and eager to be members of this new connected global society. I cannot and would not presume to propose a national policy that might allow all Haitians to participate in the global communication system and global economy. A singular solution does not exist. But, is it not worth the effort if only one child is impacted? They simply need the tools, teachers, and trust to mold them into a competitive force in this world. I do think that education leads to knowledge, and knowledge is power.

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Appendix A

Haiti Map

